

Perhaps the Treasury Department did not hear that the President is concerned about homeland security. Treasury officials may want to call the White House.

SUPPORT OUR MILITARY FAMILIES

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice concern over the undue hardship that President Bush is placing on our military families.

At a time when our Nation is asking a tremendous amount from our armed services, the administration has proceeded to deliver blow after blow to our men and women in uniform.

The Bush tax cut failed to extend a child tax credit to nearly 200,000 low-income military personnel. And then, of course, \$200 million has been cut from programs providing assistance to public schools on military bases.

The Bush administration said they would Leave No Child Behind. Well, what is happening to the children of the brave troops who are in Iraq?

The latest tax cut also scraped \$1.5 billion away from military housing. Furthermore, it cuts \$14.6 billion over 10 years from veterans benefits.

During the 2000 campaign, the President vowed to give our Armed Forces better pay, better treatment, and better training. Well, Mr. President, it is time to keep your promise.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMONS). The gentleman will state it.

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) called the President of the United States a liar. My question is, is it too late to ask that her words be taken down? This is inappropriate by our rules.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has already ruled on that matter. At the time the Chair ruled that the gentlewoman was out of order.

Mr. HAYES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It bothers me. I appreciate the ruling.

AMERICA'S SENIOR CITIZENS DESERVE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT UNDER MEDICARE

(Mr. HAYES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation that is vitally important to our Nation's seniors: a prescription drug benefit for Medicare.

We know that treating diseases with prescription medications can help re-

duce the chance of costly hospital stays and expensive medical procedures. I urge my colleagues to work together to ensure a fair and responsible Medicare plan that lowers the cost of prescription drugs now so that senior citizens can better afford the medicines they need to live healthier lives and to improve their quality of life.

No American should be forced to choose between food, shelter, or prescription drugs. Last August, I toured the eighth district of North Carolina with a petition gathering signatures of seniors who agreed that we need that prescription drug benefit now. At each stop, seniors told me of their disappointment of promises that were made, but not kept. The time is long overdue for us to make good on this promise.

Medicare is a program that has been helping millions of older Americans meet their health care needs since that first day back in 1965. We can and should strengthen Medicare to make it even better for our seniors. One critical way we can make this program better is by adding a prescription drug benefit.

Our seniors deserve no less.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 660, SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS ACT OF 2003

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 283 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 283

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 660) to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to improve access and choice for entrepreneurs with small businesses with respect to medical care for their employees. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The amendment recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except—

(1) one hour of debate on the bill, as amended, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce;

(2) the further amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by Representative Kind of Wisconsin or his designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, and shall be separately debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and

(3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 283 is a rule that provides for the consideration of H.R. 660, the Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2003. The resolution makes in order a minority party substitute that provides ample opportunity to discuss this important legislation before us, while addressing certainly the concerns of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

The rule provides 1 hour of general debate, evenly divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

This is a bipartisan bill. In fact, the legislation has 162 cosponsors on a bipartisan basis, and many, many groups that are interested in this issue are supporting this legislation.

H.R. 660 was introduced by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER). It has the strong support of the Speaker, of the Committee on Small Business chairman, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO), and the Subcommittee on Employer-Employee Relations chairman, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON).

Association Health Plans, or AHPs, allow access to needed health insurance for many who do not have health insurance. The House, I believe, Mr. Speaker, must act now to pass this long overdue legislation.

Really, the Nation is at a crossroads. We currently have over 40 million Americans without health insurance, approximately 60 percent of whom work or depend on small employers who often cannot afford these very important and needed benefits. This bill will help small business, in turn, help working families.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 660 will allow for small businesses across the country to band together through established and respected trade or professional organizations to lower health care costs. This same model already works for large companies. We believe that small businesses should also be allowed to benefit from it.

Estimates predict that anywhere from 350,000 to 8 million uninsured workers will receive health care benefits through these AHPs even at the lowest projection, and that means positive progress for many currently uninsured men and women.

Now, we may hear all sorts of arguments concerning, for example, state-by-state regulations. We have already, however, seen many large companies provide health insurance because they